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Fretilin reports over two-way radio link-up with Australia

On 19 May, it was announced in Australia that a two-way radio link with Fretilin-held territory inside East Timor had been re-established after radio contact had been broken off nearly eight years ago. First reports from Fretilin were received earlier this year. The following is a brief summary of a report entitled 'A Message of Greetings' dated 2 January 1985 from the Fretilin Commander-in Chief, Kai Rala Xanana Gusmao, which was broadcast in February.

The report reveals the continuation of massive military operations by the Indonesian Armed Forces, including air attacks and the transportation of troops to areas of operation by helicopters, since the Indonesian Commander-in-Chief, General Benny Murdani announced a new offensive in August 1983.

Xanana reports that the massacre of defenceless civilians is still a common practice as is torture. "They have created a more sophisticated prison system, a policy of starvation and of forcing able-bodied people, including children into their operations. Many people are forced to defend their villages from 5 pm till 6.30 am every day. The forces of occupation are trying to force the population to their knees by means of starvation. The Army has resorting to a policy of felling every tree they set sight on."

According to the report, the most comprehensive ever to come out of East Timor which gives an overall picture of military, political and social conditions, in some place like Los Palos in the eastern sector, the entire population is forced to spend the nights in the market place to prevent them from discovering anything about Army positions and operations. In some places, almost the entire population of a village camp (the kind of population concentrations set up by the forces of occupation throughout the country) has been wiped out. This occurred for instance in Anatau, Bobonaro in the west, in retaliation for a successful Fretilin operation against the Indonesian Army when a number of Indonesian soldiers were killed.

The terror used by the Indonesians against the population, particularly the elderly, has encouraged many people to flee to the liberated areas and join forces with the resistance fighters. Those who are caught leaving their camps without permission are treated with utmost brutality. The report mentions the case of an elderly man from Venilale who was tortured to death:

"It happens that he left his village to collect some palm-wine to feed his family even though the village was under curfew. When caught, he said he wanted to find sustenance for his family, but he was severely beaten up. His ears and nose were cut off and his lips were slashed." (The report provides the names of witnesses to this incident.)

Reporting on visits made by the International Red Cross (ICRC)

to some prisons inside East Timor, Xanana reports that in some cases. the prisoners were first removed and replaced by troops dressed in civilian clothing who naturally looked well-fed and well-treated. In Los Palos, this trick was not used, but Indonesian guards present at any contact between prisoners and the ICRC made it impossible for the prisoners to tell the mission about conditions. One prisoner named Filipe managed to escape shortly after the ICRC visit. He explained that any prisoners who told the truth to the misson about prison conditions would be severely punished afterwards. He also reported that the Indonesians have created a new classification of prisons, with Category I applying to prisons whose inmates are destined for disappearance and death. According to Costa, immediately after the ICRC mission left Los Palos Prison, many more prisoners were brought in, and the programme of torture continued unrelentingly.

'Preparations' for 1987 elections already under way

The report provides details on the Indonesian parliamentary elections held in 1982 and the methods used by the forces of occupation to force people to vote, and to vote for the Army-back party, GOLKAR. It was hoped by the Indonesians that after the 'successful' 1982 elections, it would be possible by 1984 to establish the tourist industry in East Timor. But this proved out of the question because of the continuation of military operations.

Already, the population is being subjected to a campaign to 'prepare' them for the 1987 elections. "Special Kodim (district military command) envoys visit the localities for 'election rehearsals', telling people they must vote for GOLKAR. They also press the people to stop listening to Fretilin, saying that Fretilin has no more validity 'now that it has lost in the UN.'"

The puppet governor, Mario Carrascalao spoke on many occasions about his hopes for tourism in East Timor. Now that this has proved impossible in the main area of the country, hopes are pinned on the enclave called Oecusse, on the north coast of West Timor. But in Oecusse too, physically separated from the rest of the country, the people are organised in resistance against the forces of occupation. Even though Oecusse is far removed from the area where the main military operations are taking place, the people there are subjected to persecution, arrested and beaten up.

Xanana also reports that since October 1984, more than 200 security agents have been deployed in East Timor, going from one camp to another, 'preparing' people for the 1987 elections.

Greetings

The report, transcribed from tapes of Xanana's message onto more than 40 pages, ends as it started with warm greetings "to people and governments who have unstintingly supported the just cause of the people of East Timor.... It is with deepest pride that I greet in particular Mgr Martinhu da Costa Lopes, former head of the Catholic Church in East Timor, for his staunch commitment to defending the right of the nation whose son he is."

"Today, we enter a new phase by this contact with the outside world. This is a difficult phase, considering the great difficulties we face, a resistance movement which faces a powerful army of occupation from Indonesia. This is one of the most important steps ever to have been taken since the reorganisation of the resistance in March 1981. The development of this new front is closely linked to the internal position of the resistance... To those who still pin their hopes on the collapse of Fretilin and believe Murdani's promises, we respond that our Falintil army will continue to wage war for as many years as Jakarta is ready to fight. But at the same time, we are always ready to seek a proper solution to end the struggle based on mutual trust and taking into account the interests of the two sidees involved."

Details of military operations

The report contains many details of the military operations since the August 1983 offensive was launched by General Murdani. According to Fretilin five to six hundred Indonesian soldiers have been killed. During 1984, Fretilin launched a total of 133 attacks, of which 77 were waged by four companies operating in the central region. 26 of these were waged by a singie company. Fourteen took place in the eastern sector. During the course of these atacks, Fretilin captured 152 light weapons, 4 automatic weapons, 65 AR-15, 20 Herstal of 5.5mm,, 228 MU-2 rifles, 12 G-3, as well as some HK, SKS, LE and other weapons. Apart from the heavy defeat suffered by Fretilin in Papulo in November 1983, total Fretilin casualties have amounted to 78 dead and wounded and 9 people captured.

The report contains a long list of people who have disappeared, and a report on the opening of new prisons in Baguia and Uatukarabau.

Call for an Independent Mission of Investigation

The report makes a strong appeal for a team of independent observers to visit East Timoir to provide the UN and the world at large with an objective picture of the East Timorese people's complete repudiation of the odious presence of the forces of occupation. These forces have always been and will continue to be an obstacle to any real assessment of the situation of the people. Indonesia's persistent refusal to allow independent visitors into the territory only shows how they dread the truth becoming known. Xanana sets out the conditions under which a team of investigation should be sent to East Timor as follows:

1. No officials of the forces of occupation should be present for their presence strikes fear in the Timorese people and they will not be able to speak freely.

2. Local, Timorese officials who are willing to reveal the truth and can confirm the information available from the population, must be present in such an investigation.

3. The fact-finding mission must include Mgr Filipe Belo, the

head of the Catholic Church in East Timor.

4. The mission should remain in East Timor for one month in order to travel round by car and visit the concentration camps and villages.

(Here ends the section we were able to record on 2 June, which represents only a short and partial summary.)r°frejan85

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